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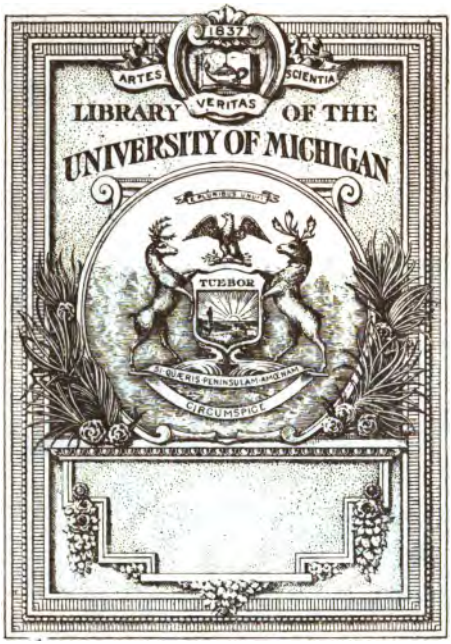

THE GIFT OF
E. L. Snelson

828
S258a

AT THE BACK OF THE MOON;

OR,

OBSERVATIONS OF LUNAR PHASES.

BY

A. LUNAR WRAY.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.
NEW YORK:
CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM.
1879.

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Electrotyped and printed by ALBERT J. WRIGHT, 79 Milk St., Boston.

To

All whom it may concern.

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Phase the First.

THE MOONSHINE JOURNEY.

A visit to Dreamland one summer night.
I sat on the beach when the moon was bright,
While the waves came in with their rythmic beat,
And lay down the ocean's spoils at my feet;—
A dead crab, some sea-weed, a bit of spar,
A wreck's sad message, that came from far.
As if none e'er died, the waves shouted in glee,
And their white edges gleamed phosphorently.
The roar of the town was far away,
And had died to a thought on that happy day.

The turmoil of life — the back-ground of rest
Gave the present escape but an added zest.
With a crescent curve of miles and miles
The beach swept round; and the wooded isles
Lay off in the shadow; and left and right
The bay's far points each held aloft its light.

So I sat on the rude bench by the shore,
Not thinking, but musing; while roar on roar
The big waves tumbled and sobbed and moaned,
As if they for sea-widowed lives atoned.
Bridging the whitecaps, o'er the shimmering bay,
The rising moonbeams stretched a sloping way;
A brave, wide road of yellow light, that led
Where only fancy's airy feet could tread.

And now a wonder happens. On the sand
A boat-keel grates, and some strange people land;

Human they look, yet have a foreign air;
Strange are their faces, strange the clothes they wear.
A moment they consult together; then
Addresses me the leader of the men.

"Sir, ye are earth-born. We are lunar folk;
A month has passed since we our farewell spoke
To our moon-people, and for earth afar
Slid down yon moon-path like a falling star.
We came, moon envoys, to observe and tell
How things on earth are done, or ill or well.
We've looked and studied; none have seen us pass;
We travel when the dew is on the grass.
Night is our day; we go from town to town
Sight-seeing only when the sun is down.
But now our task is over; and to-night
Again we sail up yonder stream of light

Back to our country. To confirm our tale
That we to earth and back did truly sail
We 'd have you join us; you our ways can learn,
And teach our lore to earth when you return.
Be not afraid: when next the moon is round,
Again your feet shall stand upon the ground."

Men say there's strange power in the lunar beam —
Perhaps it touched my brain. As in a dream
Things that impossible and wild appear
When one awakes, yet in the dream are clear,
So was it now. I was awake I knew,
Yet all was natural and all was true;
A lunar voyage no stranger seemed to me
Than a vacation trip to Italy.
I thought it over, — I 'd a month to spend, —
Then to the moon-man said, "I 'll go, my friend."

We leapt aboard. Ne'er shone the moon more bright
Than when we floated off into the night.
The stream of rays that from the beach did seem
As unsubstantial as a morning dream,
Now flowed beneath us like a river strong,
That rippled past us as we sped along.
The moon-folk homeward gaze; and on the air
That whistles by us streams their coal-black hair.
I look below; the sea creeps far away;
Silent as space its thunders in the bay.
Earth grows a far-off ring against the sky,
Where darkening lands and silver oceans lie.
They speak not to me till I wave farewell
To earth, and look about me. Then the spell
Of silence broken, mingling voices speak:
"A lovely night!" "It doesn't seem a week

Since we left home. And now before the noon
Of night we'll be once more upon the moon."

Then turned to me the captain by my side:
"My name is Enak — name I bear with pride;
I earned it when the open polar sea
I added to the moon's geography.
My first mate here is Yelnats; without fear
He's trod the wildest regions of our sphere.
Tobak and Kook, and half a hundred more,
In old time did the moon's far lands explore;
But only in these latter days appear
The skill that masters all, and knows no fear.
We harness now the powers that used to curse,
And reign, the conquerors of the universe."

"But Enak, one thing puzzles me," I said;
"Earth's sages say, the moon is cold and dead:

That there's no air nor water on its face,
So it can't be a habitable place.
A man once lived there in the days of yore;
But he has now become our nursery lore.
Our telescopes have searched, and they've descried
Mountains and craters dead, and naught beside.
And yet you're here. This riddle solve me then,
How is it that you live unknown to men?"

"Oh, that is easy," said he, "you'll see soon:
There is a country up behind the moon.
And as it ever keeps the self-same face
Turned to the earth, ours is a hidden race.
Once, ages gone, our fathers used to dwell
Upon this face; but after, it befell
That great convulsions rent the earthward side.
Volcanoes belched; and moon-quakes shook; and wide

The cracking crust was opened; and the sea
Sucked down the gulf. Our fathers then did
flee —
The remnant that was left — and from the sun
Shut out, their strange and modern life begun.
Most died; but many changed. And in the strife
The fittest were conformed to their new life.
Our science has so grasped moon forces now
That 'neath our will all difficulties bow.
We could not bear it if the sun shone bright;
So we prefer our home-made heat and light.
'Tis strange to us no more, though 'tis to you:
The natural's what you are accustomed to."

My thoughts now turned upon our ship, that
sped
Like northern lights when winter heavens are red.
This Yelnats noticed, where he sat and played

The handle that the wondrous craft obeyed.
"I see," he said, "you earth-folk fail to find
The secret art that navigates the wind:
A new invention at the moon; but we
Must guard it yet with careful jealousy;
For you earth-men, if once the way were given,
Would swarm the stars, and wreck the peace of heaven."

But now the moon grew on our nearing sight
And filled the wide sky with her mild daylight.
For moonshine, as 'tis seen from earth's far land,
Is only simple daylight, close at hand.
Wild, ragged mountains towered beneath; and down
Sunk sunless valleys 'neath their rocky frown.
I only caught a glimpse: we swept away
And on us glowed an artificial day.

A strange, new world flashed on me; for 'twas
noon
Up there upon the land behind the moon.

From my high vantage, as I looked adown,
I saw spread out beneath a mighty town: —
High mountains, sloping hills, and wooded vales,
And a broad river bright with colored sails;
And flags that fluttered in the noon-tide breeze
O'er palace, tower and wide streets lined with
trees.
From lofty columns here and there were seen
Lights that flamed out like suns; and in between
The noiseless carriages went to and fro
On streets that rumble not, like those below.

Now came my first glimpse of the moon's
strange ways

That so astonished me in after days;
For, on a sudden rent the startled air
A hiss from thousands in the public square.
This was their greeting. I discovered soon
That things went backward up behind the moon.
For as we landed, thousands round us thronged
To give us welcome, noisy and prolonged.
Not wilder were the demonstrations when
Columbus from new worlds sailed home again;
For hiss on hiss arose, and from the crowd
"Long live Yelnats and Enak!" rang aloud.

I pass by much that happened; for I mean
Not to tell everything I may have seen;
Though all were worthy earnest thought t' engage
If one had time in this, our busy age;
But only so much matter to relate
Of manners, thoughts, and customs in the state

As may, by contrast, show the wiser way
We've learned to do things by the light of day.
For there be busy-bodies here below
Who prate of change and progress, thus and so;
Who loud proclaim that, as the planets bear
Their torches up the age's pathway, there
Will be new realms of truth discovered, and
The vision of a more contented land.
They dare to think the sons may wiser be
Than were the fathers; and they impiously
Claim something holier may appear on earth
Than dreams of gods the primal years gave birth.
They are disturbers in these latter days,
And turn the earth from out "the good old ways."
"Wide-open eyes, and earnest hearts," they scream,
"Are better leaders than the old world's dream."
And with an egotism most intense

They talk of science — call it common sense;
They basely say that somewhere there may be
Ways better than our "best society."
They doubt if our commercial ways are just
And would upset the basis of our trust.
The state they shock with their *reform* assaults,
And dare assert a politician false.
The old philosophers they think may err,
Prate loud of truth, and say they'll worship her;
And even religion's sacred ark profane
By asking proof — as though it could be plain.

Perchance the follies of another land
May help our restless folk to understand
That our Republic, when all's said and done,
Is the only perfect country 'neath the sun;
That all they need to do is — lend their nose
To the infallible leadership of those

Who, on the "Fourth," talk of the "Declaration,"
And prove by *shouting* that they love the nation.
If any dare to doubt these things, he 's sold
His loyal principles for British gold;
Or he 's an infidel, and would o'erthrow
The grounds of faith in all we *think* we know.

I shall relate, then, some of those strange ways
The moon-folk follow; and if they amaze
The reader, and with gratitude he turn
To our own wiser customs, let him learn
To think with charity of those whom fate
Fools with delusions in this far-off state.
Absurd, wild notions are th' unhappy boon
Of those in that strange land behind the moon.

Phase the Second.

A GLIMPSE OF WEN KROY.

We dropt adown
In Notsob town
When first we landed from the ether sea;
The hub is here
Of the lunar sphere,
And this is the centre of gravity.
But Yelnats told
Of another old
And famous city, where to live was joy;
And then he said,
"Notsob's a dead
Provincial little town beside Wen Kroy.

Go home with me,

And Wen Kroy see,

For Enak will be busy a week or so.

He first must tell

Of what befell

In our late journey to the world below.

In these few days

You may see some ways

Of our brave town on Nattahnam's fair isle;

And then Enak,

When you get back,

Will entertain you in Notsob awhile."

When we were there

We crossed a square,

And up a narrow street, called Broad, we strolled;

A huge white hall

Or palace tall—

I knew not which—I wondering did behold.

Then Yelnats said,

"Here rules the head

Of this our noble city. O'er the seas,

An Emerald born,

He from the morn

Comes with his club, like earth-born Hercules.

Boss is his name.

When first he came,

In brogue and brogans, he was called 'b'hoy.'

He swiftly rose

By jobs and blows

And grog, to be the great man of Wen Kroy.

He takes from us

The care and fuss

Of looking after all our own affairs.

And thus you see

He leaves us free

To speculate, and buy and sell our wares.

We 're free to say

Whom we 'll obey;

That is, with only one slight reservation;

He picks the men,

And we're free then

To vote for those he puts in nomination."

Then from the crowd

A shriek came loud

Of one down trampled 'neath the horses' heels;

One starry-breasted

Him quick arrested

For needless noise and blocking up the wheels.

A "rough" passed by

And winked his eye,

Clasping the starred one's hand with something in it.

And thus I saw

How public law

Rests on the popular love for those who win it.

I could but smile
To see the style
Of their salutes. They lift the nose on high,
When on the street
Some one they meet
Who isn't *a la mode*, and pass her by.
Men equals clap
With boisterous slap
And ask them if they won't step in and ***smile.***
This was to me
A mystery
I walked on pondering for half a mile.
They bend down low
To power or show,
Or those who have what moon-folks call "the dosh."
"For those who win it
There 's millions in it,
And all things else," their strange speech says,
"are bosh."

We strolled on still
Up Yarrum Hill;
Here, Yelnats said, reside the great Not Nob.
In houses fine
They sleep and dine,
And look upon all others as a mob.
We passed before
An open door;
A strange fair creature tripped adown the stairs.
She stooped and bound
Her arms around
Some yards of trailing stuff like shopmen's wares.
Her garments light
Were pulled back tight,
So fastening close her limbs. "'Tis thus, you see,"
Said Yelnats then,
"We lunar men
Maintain our own superiority.

Lest women wise
Become, and rise,
We bind them hand and foot. To keep them quiet
We let them play
With trifles gay,
And '*women's rights*,' are wholly stifled by it."
To kill ennui
Seems here to be
From morn to night, a woman's occupation.
I could but smile
To think the while
How strange 'twould seem to our own Yankee nation.
The men take rank,
Or by the bank,
Or by the street they live on. For the rest,
Paintings and books
Are kept for looks.
Not are, or know; but what they have 's the test.

In the wild strife
Of lunar life,
To gain street rank, all precious things are given.
They toil, grow sad,
And, raging mad,
Bear loads, wear chains; but think themselves in heaven.
But if one fail,
'Tis no avail
How noble. Failure is the one great sin.
And if they gain,
At cost of pain
Or wrong, no matter. Blest are they who win!
A wedding gay
Was held one day;
To us the father invitation sends.
Yelnats, aside,
Told me the bride
Was sold, *at private auction*, by her friends.

Her hand was won

By the eldest son

Of another family on the street.

By a failing bank

He lost his rank,

And never more are they allowed to meet.

'Tis only among

The vulgar throng

Of the common crew, that a foolish girl

Will deign to sigh,

Or turn her eye

On a lover who brings not diamond or pearl.

There 's a curious clique

The Not Nobs seek,

A circle they name " Good Society."

In this they call,

Not for love at all,

But because, as they say, " It 's the thing, you see."

I could not make out
What 'twas all about,
What was said, or done ; or what "the thing" meant.
But so glad they seemed
When 'twas over, I deemed
From some strange, stern sense of duty they went.
Ponderous books
Of learned looks
Lay on their tables, or adorned the wall.
One, Elbib named,
Was chiefly famed ;
But I did not notice them read it at all.
On this I pondered,
And much I wondered
To see them rear and worship a tome ;
And which, I saw,
They called "the law ;"
But by which they squared neither business nor home.

Down town they bless
But one god, Success,
Whose temple's in Llaw Street, and on the Exchange.
Elbib and he
So disagree
That how they could reverence both seemed strange.
That night I blest,
As I to rest
Lay down, the gracious ways of Providence;
That I was born
Where comes the morn
And smiles on people that have common-sense.
I could not praise
Their Wen Kroy ways,
Nor did I wish Yelnats t' offend. So soon
I saw 'twas vain
To try to explain. —
Things backward went up there behind the moon.

Phase the Third.

NOTSOB NOTIONS.

Back into Notsob town again;
Glad enough t' escape Wen Kroy.
I could not make their customs plain;
So greeting Enak again with joy,
I hoped his people's saner ways
Would clear my brain of its Wen Kroy daze.
I found him living upon a hill—
"'Tis the only place to live," said he;
"No common air our lungs do fill
Up where we look out o'er the sea.
Yelnats is a wonderful man," he said;
"I only marvel how he can stand

The Wen Kroy folk — a man with a head —
And not live in our intellectual land.
This hill is the centre of all the moon;
Toward it the moon forces all converge;
'Tis no wonder then, that late or soon,
All knowledge in such a place should merge.
We call those *men* who live on the hill,
For man is a word that means to think;
'Tis only a mob the low streets fill,
Who never at Churcul's fountain drink."

Upon this wondrous hill there stands
A building famous in lunar lands,
Whose gilded dome shines out afar
O'er sea and land like a glittering star;
The walls and rooms are plain enough,
But the dome seems made of some magic stuff.
At least it's the common belief up there,

That in this dome are such virtues rare,
That sitting under it fools grow wise;
That the demagogue no longer lies;
That the most unworldly parson here
Might gain a glimpse of a new idea;
That city dunces and country clods
Are here transformed into demigods.
So every year the people seek
Out certain ones whose minds are weak,
Or in whose morals is some defect,
Or are willing to pay to be of "the elect;"
And these they send away from home
To sit some months beneath the dome;
They seem to think that somehow then
They 'll grow to be better and wiser men.
And so firm in this is the common faith —
I could not clearly make out the cause
Whatever this curious collection saith,
They think inspired, and call them laws.

And, as far as I could understand,
'Twas because here rose the wondrous dome,
That made this hill, in all the land,
The "proper place" to have one's home.
Within the ring where its shadow fell
Was thought to reside the Churcul spell;
And one who would be just "the thing"
Must not live far from the magical ring.
Not alone in Wen Kroy, but Notsob too,
I found "the thing" was the thing to do.
And yet "the thing" was not the same
In the rival cities; though the name
Was identical. It seemed to be
A sort of patron deity;
Some spoke of it as "Propriety;"
But though I questioned much, I doubt
If I altogether made it out.

Next morn the Notsob people slept
Till very late. It seemed to be
A day that by the folk was kept
In honor of some deity.
Some called him Htabbas, some Yadnus —
They seemed to mean about the same;
But those of the stricter form of use,
Held there was much in the very name.
Their forms of worship are very odd;
But here, where all things backward go,
I cannot wonder if e'en their god
Absurd shall seem to us below.

Six days they worship the great god "Biz,"
And notes and gold are their offering;
To the early riser his favor is,
And groans of toil the hymns they sing;
But on Yadnus' day they lie abed

As long as sleep will hold their eyes;
And a baked round loaf of dark brown bread,
Swine's flesh and beans, are their sacrifice.
Then later the temples they seek, or ride;
They work—though in another way—
They lounge, read, feast, till eventide.
I could not unravel this curious day;
For Elbib here is their holy book;
And as o'er its precepts I did look,
I saw that swine's flesh everywhere
Was held accurst. I saw too there
That just one thing Yadnus desires—
Resting from work. That on this day
The people must not kindle fires,
Cook, travel, nor labor any way.
No other laws it gave, and yet
These strange moon-people backward read,
The *one* command they all forget,
And *do* what Elbib never decreed.

In this strange way the moon-folk keep
One day to Yadnus. Then, I judge,
For the next six days he lies asleep,
While the people worship Krow or Drudge,
That seemed to be other names for Biz.
At any rate, I did not see,
What Yadnus says the right way is,
The people walk to any degree
On other days. And Biz appeared
To be the god they really trust.
Yadnus, I thought, they no longer feared;
His worship was crumbling into dust;
A relic of the past, no doubt,
From which the life is dying out.

But unlike all the wide earth shows
Was a famous club that next day met.
At its name moon-folk turned up their nose,

But into it still they strive to get.
Outsiders sneer until they win
The proud distinction of being in;
And then, with most superior air,
The ignorant pity who are not there.
They call the members *those who know*,
Or rich, or poor, they measure his brain.
The lunar name for those who go
Is *Bighed*, if I heard it plain.

They meet in a quiet street, apart
From the drudging people who worship Biz;
For they seem to cultivate the art
Of keeping away from the real—what is;
And a scoffer said, who was not there,
That all their doings were "in the air."
Of course this meeting has its home
Within the shadow of the dome;

And the club is known both near and far
By its curious name of Lakidar.
Like other things in this strange land,
Its meaning I failed to understand;
The word means something about a root—
At least so all moon-people say—
But instead of digging, they dispute,
And seem to soar the other way.
I thought at first that it must be
A new religion. The air was full—
And spoken always reverently—
Of talk of "the spirit of Churcul."
But they had no altar, and no cult
Such as on earth we worship call;
They only gathered to consult
About "*Th' Unfathomable All.*"

One read a paper showing how
Nothing at all may something be;

Proceeding much at length to show
That only blind men really see.
I caught a few words, uttered low,
As "Hegel," and "Antinomy."
I whispered Enak, where I sat,
And asked if all the Lakidars
Knew what the reader was getting at.
He said, "O no! the distant stars
Shine out from space's unfathomed deep;
Their lonely way they ever keep.
We count him but a shallow brain
Who makes his meaning clear and plain.
What man of soaring genius would
By every fool be understood?
Upon the Lakidars' last day
I read before them an essay;
And ere the paper I begun,
I said, 'Not two, perhaps not one

In all the club can follow me;'
And they applauded rapturously.
So much they love profundity.

They hold one very strange idea,
Peculiar to the lunar sphere.
On earth, I think men would incline
To say that it was "all moonshine."
'Tis this. Each separate Lakidar
Holds that whate'er *he feels* is true.
E. g., he thinks he sees a star;
He will not stoop to prove it to you.
With telescope go sweep the sky,
And if no bright orb meet *your* eye
He 's sorry for you; but he thinks
The stars may go out when he winks.
At any rate he *thought:* he *saw:*
And that for him 's the highest law.

He claims a vision that transcends
The need of proof; and there he ends.

I said to Enak, "Even if true,
It may be very good for you,
But how 'll the knowledge come to me
Until 'tis proved?" And he replied,
"Churcul enables us to see;
If you are blind, then blind abide."
"But," said I, "was there not a man,
Once famous in your lunar lore,
Named Nocab, who wrought out a plan
Of how this universe to scan
From little knowledge on to more;
Who started out from what he knew,
And then from this conclusions drew?"
"Yes," he replied, "but he 's a clod
Who is content to dig and plod;

Down to hard facts his wings to tie,
When he aloft may soar and fly
In fathomless immensity."

When we were out, I said, "My friend,
To what does all this talking tend?
And, tell me, wherein will it end?"
"'Twill end—in talking still," he said;
"Transcendent reason still refuses
To tie itself to vulgar uses.
We do not want to settle things.
If we should condescend to proof,
'Twould clip the nimble fancy's wings
That loves to weave the warp and woof
Of spirit-robes for thoughts that dwell
In absolute Being's primal cell.

Out from the famous club we went,
And passed into another street;

And yet the day was far from spent,
And wonders still my eyes did greet.

It seems that in ages far remote,
Some people — none knew who, or when,
Or where — some mystic volumes wrote,
And left them for succeeding men.
When many cycles had passed by,
The faith among the people rose
That these books dropped down from the sky; —
'Tis ever the thing that no one knows
That awes us by its mystery —
And so the moon-folk came to hold
That some dread god the books had sent,
And awful tortures, all untold,
Would fall in wrathful punishment
On him who dared to think or speak
Aught that the books did not contain;

In the deep moon-craters such should shriek
And writhe in never-ending pain.
This book was Elbib: and as year
By year passed by, the lunar sphere
Was covered o'er with temples built
By priests who Elbib read; and taught
Moon-people how t' escape the guilt
Of sin inherited, and free thought.
But as the years grew old, some found
Facts that were very obstinate,
And had not been in Elbib bound.
Then they began to circulate
The harrowing doubt that possibly
The universe was something more
Than any single book could be.
The raging priests their hair then tore,
And piously, but loudly, swore
That the moon itself on Elbib rested;

And if their god's revenge were tested,
Down the lunar sphere should fall,
And ruin overwhelm them all.

But although Elbib spoke of love,
And said a Father reigned above,
The priests his wishes sought to gain,
By fire and torture, axe and chain.
But torture, axe, and chain, and fire
Failed t' extinguish the desire
The moon-folk had by this time shown
To do some thinking of their own.
The heresies prevailed and spread,
Till over all the moon 'twas found —
Some saw with gladness, some with dread —
The priests were ever losing ground.

But more than all things else, I thought,

They feared a something in the air;
A sort of spirit-force that wrought
Freedom of thinking everywhere.
And this same spirit the moon-folk
Stirred up to always asking, Why?
And the magic "why" would snap the yoke
The priests had held the people by;
For when you asked them why, it fell
That they were dumb, and could not tell.
As far as I could find it out,
This spirit they Ecneics called:
I could not certain be about
The name; for they were so appalled
Whene'er 'twas spoken, that to me
It seemed outright discourtesy
To question further; so I turned
To other topics; but I learned
That somehow they this mighty power

Regarded as a demon strong,
Whose advent knelled their own death hour,
And boded every kind of wrong.

It fell then, that about this time
There rose a champion whose might
Was mooted through the whole moon-clime,
Restorer of the priestly right.

Straight then from out the Lakidars
I went to see the mighty lunar,
Where, marshalled for their magic wars,
He led the priests, their famed dragooner.
For 'twas a magic war he fought,
And strange, as far as I could judge;
His weapons were not made of thought,
But something Enak said was *fudge*.
A magic war I say; for we
On earth do call that "sleight of hand"

For which no adequate cause we see,
And lookers-on can't understand.
It was not reasoning: for that starts
From something *known;* and then goes on
To what *must* follow; and imparts
Truths that will stand. But when he's done,
You find he started with a guess,
Or an assertion none could prove;
And left off in a cloudy mess
Of windy words that round you drove.
I asked Enak what 'twas he meant
By "fudge." With lunar smile, he said:
"When gullible people are content
To hear a man who's lost his head;
Who don't know what he talks about,
And they who hear him do not know,
We call it *fudge.* You, I found out,
Call 't 'metaphysics' down below."

I tried to find this juggler's art,
And how he proved Ecneics wrong;
He stamps his foot, and gives a start,
And bellows at the awe-struck throng.
Then furiously he swings his arms,
And, with a wild look in his eye,
The feeble moon-folk he alarms
With words of awful mystery.
To make my meaning very clear:
The jugglers of our earthly sphere
Eat flax, and spit out smoke and fire.
"With his enchantments he did so." *
As Indian "medicine-men" perspire,
Yell, roll their eyes, sway to and fro,
So he.

And Enak told me how
He in his room prepared himself

* Ex. 7:11.

For these occasions. Row on row,
Piled up on many a groaning shelf,
Were books of fathomless mystery.
And in these books were words brought home
German From Namreg moon-lands o'er the sea,
So big that when they 'd filled one tome,
Exhausted one whole volume's text,
They were "continued in our next."
These books he fed on, till his head
Swelled huge; his solemn tread
Grew elephantine. And for fear
That he might burst some awful day,
And hurl to wreck the lunar sphere,
He wore a secret hoop, they say.
As in th' "Arabian Nights," 'tis said,
The huge, sky-filling, cloudy sprite,
Crammed in the bottle, heels and head,
At last was corked in out of sight;

So he, these mighty words of wind
Swallowed, till as in Æolus' cave
They raged in what he called his mind.
Then on the platform he would rave
And storm and thunder, till the crowd
Threw up their hats and screamed aloud:
"Down with Ecneics! who is he
That in our great Mogul can't see
Unfathomable profundity!"

As cases of moon logic, note
These specimens that now I quote.
"There's a behind, and a before:
And therefore it is plain to me
That an ark was built by one named Noah
Who sailed the primal lunar sea.
There is an up, and there's a down:
And so, if logic does n't fail,

The reason Jonah did n't drown
Was the compassion of a whale.
There is an out, and there 's an in:
Who the conclusion then can 'scape,
That all men fell in Adam's sin,
And were n't developed from an ape?
All things must have a cause; and so" —
But this last point I could n't see!
If *he* were caused, the act would throw
On some one, whom I did n't know,
A sad responsibility.

But just as out of doors I flung,
A gust of words hissed by with speed:
With "bioplasm" the high hall rung;
"Lady Macbeth's red-handed deed,"
And "innermost highest" slipped his tongue,
With "You dare doubt and you 'll be d — d."

When we were out Enak confessed
That he was weary: and he cried,
In strange moon-phrase, "Give us a rest!"
If this were prayer, or expletive
I knew not, and could not decide:
Nor did he explanation give.

I followed where he led the way,
And entered we a little stall;
Said he, "'Twas dry. Let us allay
Our thirst by drinking some Regal." Lager
'Twas brought in foaming. "This," said he,
"Is what the mighty gods of eld
Drank in their regal revelry,
That they on lunar heights once held.
A famous cup-bearer, called Snah, Hans.
The secret stole and gave to men;
But yet some folks so foolish are

That they would send it back again.
Their Notsob leader really thinks
That lying, theft, and vicious ways
Are not so bad as he who drinks
The hop, though he's a saint and prays."

While we sat there, a man came in.
"Just back from Eporue!" he said.
Among the gods I thought he'd been,
So proud and stately was his tread.
I found this Eporue to be
A land beyond Citnalta sea;
And, in this part of luna-land,
Their talk gave me to understand,
That those born out of Notsob town
Were Noboddees, of no renown.
And even a man in Notsob born,
Who in its sacred air first drew

His breath, must yet toward the morn,
Sail o'er the waves to Eporue,
Before that he could hope to be
A full-developed Sumboddee.

I hid these sayings in my heart,
Intending, ere I did depart,
To see this famous land, and know
Wherein its wondrous power lay,
That so its lore I might convey
To my earth-people down below.

Of Yadnus' day one curious feature
That struck me, was the Notsob preacher,
Or preachers rather; for the babble
Of all conflicting tongues that shouted
Round Shinar's tower, a barbarous rabble,
Made not a more confusing din;

For some believed, and others doubted
Of heaven, of virtue, hell and sin.
And only one thing each one knew —
He held the doctrine that was true.

One, "Evil Eeknay," found it hard
To live with others, so alone
He thought 'twould prove a paying card
To have a chapel of his own.
The great ambition fired his heart
To be the preacher of the masses;
So circus bills, and chromo art,
He used t' attract the common cl—asses.
His sermons were a ten-cent * hash
Of blood-and-thunder novelette,
Of Elbib stories, and the "flash"
Suggestions of Police Gazette.

* Admission ten cents.

I asked Enak if such wild prate
Up on the moon could win renown;
He laughed and said, "Why, he's the great
Foolometer of Notsob town.
When our statistics we make out,
We find how many dimes he's got;
From all our folk, subtract his rout,
We know what part is idiot."

There was another Notsob preacher,
A Centaur man, who did incline
Not much to love the human creature,
But doted on the fast equine.
Not often did his rich mind travel
Freighted with theologic load;
He rather loved to spurn the gravel
With highflyer on the Llim-mad road.
In Elbib's name he taught the people

What style of shot-gun to endorse;
And how to win the chase called "steeple,"
And how to rear "the perfect horse."
He held that thus to him 'twas given
To teach the people to be fast;
For those who here could win, at last
Might reach life's greater goal — in heaven.

Another one, of some position,
Taught people not to ride or shoot;
But seemed to think he had a mission
To show them how to evolute.
Some said he had no god at all,
Nor any gospel they could see:
He scorned all talk of lunar "fall,"
Rejected moon depravity,
And only worshipped "Unity."
And Enak said, "The one defect

That runs through all his constitution,
Is his conceit that can expect
To save the moon by 'Evolution.'
He has the fatal gift of talk;
Assumes the lofty critic's part;
And thinks a tyro's words can balk
The ancient faith-defenders' art."

And still another talked as though
He held in ward the one true church;
And on its cart 'twould never go
Unless he held * it in its lurch;
And yet, as Roman augurs laughed,
On looking each in others' face,
He sneered in secret at his craft,
And ridiculed his sacred (?) place.
He said, "When I began, I thought

* *Vide* 2 Sam. 6: 6.

Myself in saving souls engaged;
But that is chaff with which are caught
Clerics, to be 'in orders' caged."
And yet the fellow still would prate,
And talk of "infidels" forsooth;
He 'd rattle on of church and state
As if he really thought 'twas truth.

A fifth one thinks the quickest way
To lead the moon-folk on to glory —
A sort of flavoring for dry hay —
Is, cram the gospel in a "story."
So he has told them "ten times one";
And with his sugar-coated pills,
Hopes his prescription, when it's done,
Will cure them of all lunar ills.

And still another straddles wide

All chasms of division over;
In both directions seeks to ride,
And all the doxies tries to cover.
He will no contradictions see
But in *appearance*, not in *sense*.
He thinks the man of breadth should be
At once on both sides of the fence.
But though the *roots* of all be *one*,
And all life started on one plan,
Yet follow on till it is done,
This turns out monkey, that one man;
So, though all doxies have one root,
They issue in all kinds of fruit.

Some of these preachers think no man
Can enter heaven except by diving;
By water is the only plan,
However holy be the living;

And if he has not been all under
In tank or river, heels and head,
From such an one they keep asunder;
Will not drink with him, nor eat bread.

Some talk of an "experience,"
A sort of spasm they go through;
A groan or shout is evidence
The promised land is full in view.

I wondered not the people drifted
This way and that, in flurried fashion,
So many guide-posts were uplifted,
So many shouted, hoarse with passion,
That they, and they alone, were sent,
To heaven to tell the folk the way,
And that God's wrathful punishment
Would fall on him who failed t' obey.

And when, all wearied out with this,
Some said that they should try to be
Good as they knew, and hope for bliss,
'Twas scouted as "morality."
"Morality was good," they said;
"'Twas well enough below to try it;
But 'twas not current coin o'erhead,
And none could e'er win heaven by it."

Their heaven, I thought, must be a place
Wherefrom, by favor, the depraved
Would see below, in hell, the race
Of those who always had behaved.

'Twas strange to one so proud to be
A member of our Yankee nation,
To learn what was revealed to me
Of moon ideas of education.

They have what, in their own moon phrase,
They call a race — curriculum;
Where round through all their youthful days
The children run. Each seeks to come
First to the goal. What he brings there,
Or what he is when he is through —
Of these they do not seem to care:
To get there first's the thing to do.
I watched them. Nerves were on the strain;
Faces grew pale as on they ran;
Not rarely cracked an o'erwrought brain;
Here fell a wreck where ought t' have stood a man.
I looked on wondering; then to Enak said:
"What wise shipmaster out to sea
Would send a ship, with storms o'erhead,
And breakers growling angrily —
However finely he the engine built,
However gayly he the cabin gilt —

With hulk unsound, unfit the shock
Of waves to meet, or hidden rock?
What worth is high-wrought brain, when down
The storm falls, and the seamen drown?"
And Enak said, "But then, you see,
Unless the children run, they 'll be
Outstript by others; and the pride
That loves to see one's children win,
The dire disgrace could ne'er abide
Of seeing them lag." It seemed a sin
To me, who knew our perfect ways.
But to remonstrate was in vain;
I looked on in a sad amaze.
'Twas useless for me to explain
Our wiser methods. For I soon
Learned that 'twas quite in vain t' expect
By all things not to be perplext
Here on the land behind the moon.

Not only this: I also saw
That schools, as well as other things,
Were governed by an old-time law —
Mighty as wills of despot kings —
That made the thoughts of men long dead
Stronger than all their living wit;
They seemed to have an awful dread,
If aught were old, of changing it.
I judged that somehow they believed
The spirits of the dead were grieved,
If their descendants aught discerned
That they, in old time, had not learned:
So, if they walked a new-found path,
They seemed to dread their fathers' wrath.
I thought they must have failed to see
That each succeeding century
Was older than the last; and so,
If wisdom does with th' ages grow,

What they the modern called, in truth
Was hoary age, and not rash youth.
But by the strange thought they were bound,
That somehow the moon's childhood knew
All truth that ever need be found;
And they no otherwise should do,
But only ever o'er and o'er
Repeat the fathers' ancient lore.

It followed that they thought it wise,
In all the universities,
To study old philosophies
And languages of ancient men;
Their manners and their ways of thought.
"If we can keep to this, why then,
They said, "we 'll gain the end we 've sought."
About this time some men arose
Who uttered a new heresy —

That what one learns, as up he grows,
Should fit him for his destiny;
For in old time the only thought
Was discipline. None tried to win
Fitness for work that must be wrought:
He only cared for discipline.
No useful thing need one be taught:
Not what was now, but what had been;
Not problems with which life was fraught;
He only needed discipline.
When questioned, "Discipline for what?"
The question seemed to them a sin:
They stared, and gave no answer, but
"The thing we want is discipline."
But then the heretics suggested,
That if the thing were fairly tested,
The pupil's mind perhaps might be
Developed, trained as thoroughly

In modern lore, as learning what,
Soon as the college course was through,
Would straightway have to be forgot
While he was learning something new.
But still it followed, when these men,
Who thought a thorough education
Should discipline, and more — should then
Fit for some wholesome occupation,
Began their theories to expound,
There rose a hubbub of dissent,
That in the noise their voices drowned,
And sentenced them to banishment.
A scheme possessed my mind just then
For the relief of lunar men —
To strip our earthly alma-maters
Of some of their wise educators,
And send them as a precious boon
Up to the land behind the moon.

Another thing perplexed me too,
So different from the way we do;
They did not learn some one thing well,
Thus mastering a whole idea,
But picked up fragments as they fell
Scattered all o'er the lunar sphere.
Our earthly children are amused
By a kaleidoscope. We show
Them glittering fragments all confused,
Forever shifting to and fro.
Thus, on the moon, the children see
All knowledge of all objects tumbled
In orderless perplexity
And sad confusion ever jumbled:
A smattering of this and that,
Not anything completely shown;
Glimpses of thoughts, that, like a bat,
When daylight comes, away have flown.

They have what they "accomplishments"
Agree to call. They seemed to be
Used most of all, as punishments
For callers who drop in to tea.
At any rate, I used to find
That though they smiled, and said 'twas kind
Of friends to entertain them so;
They sighed, and looked relieved to go.

But there was one thing that to me
Seemed little short of lunacy.
A traveller in a foreign land
Finds much that's hard to understand;
But rarely to him does it fall
To find what has no sense at all.
But one thing in the Notsob schools
Appeared to me the work of — fools.

It seems that when the town was new
The people all had thought alike
Of state lore, and religion too.
But soon came from the land of Mike —
A fair green isle of Eporue —
A race of men who worshipped saints,
Besides the god Notsob adored;
'Twas then that rose up loud complaints;
The school became a two-edged sword
That threatened bitter war. For when
The children gathered at the school,
Before they learned their lessons, then
They had obeyed an ancient rule
To read from Elbib. This had grown
To be a law. But this new race
Said that the law should be o'erthrown,
And their own custom take its place.
At least, they said, it was unjust

That they should pay for education,
While on their children there was thrust
That which would end in their damnation;
For both sides held the strange idea
That if the children learned to think
As did the others, they would sink
In craters of the lunar sphere,
Where the great god of heaven would send
Upon them torments without end.
And yet — this was the strangest part —
They both believed that Elbib taught
The only way to cleanse the heart,
And tell to men the high god's thought.
But Elbib was so strange a book,
It brought salvation or damnation,
One or the other, if you took,
Or this or that interpretation;
So all depended on who read,

And told to children what it said.
If this was how the gods *revealed*
Their will in Notsob, I begun
To wonder how it would be done
If their wills were to be *concealed.*
But still the war raged on; each side
Held that the other had no right
By his opinions to abide,
And that 'twas all done out of spite.
Then said the new race: "We'll divide;
We'll take our children, and we'll train
Them as we please." But all in vain.
The others said, "Thumb-screws and racks
You used, when once you had the strength;
If we divide with you the tax,
You 'll try the same thing here, at length."
Then there rose up some wiser men —
Or wiser they did seem to me —

Who tried to make things right again
On principles of equity.
They said: "The schools are made to teach
The practical affairs of life;
How each can win in this hard strife,
And some fair goal of honor reach.
Take Elbib from the schools, and so
The cause of all debate shall go.
Let all the children then be taught,
Wisdom of action and of thought,
That they may learn the duties then
Of business, home, and citizen.
Your firesides and Yadnus' day
Shall give you ample time for these:
There teach your children to obey
What temple or what god you please.
It is not just, men to compel
To fit their little ones for hell,

Or what they think is hell; and too,
You 'd be the first ones to rebel
Were the same thing but tried on you.
Elbib has said that men are brothers;
What you don 't like, don 't do to others."
But both sides swore, in pious wrath,
To sweep the others from their path;
And that they 'd never brothers be
With heretics who could not see
Their horrible infidelity.

And so the war went on, until
Each found he could not have his will;
"We 'll have no schools at all," said they;
"The other side shan't have his way."
So preachers, teachers, dons and deans
Hurled books and logic at each other,
And got up such a mighty pother —

I know not what the language means;
But Enak said, — that "all the schools,
In this wild war of wordy fools,
Were just smashed into smithereens."

Whatever "smithereens" may be,
I knew by his disgusted face,
O'er which his tears the wrath did chase,
That 'twas some sad calamity.
I said, "O Enak, down on earth
No such wild folly e'er had birth.
If in this lunar air there be
The germs of such absurdity,
Lest my wits go, let *me* go soon
Down from this land behind the moon."

Phase the Fourth.

MOON POLITICS.

But now was drawing nigh election day;
Not only in Wen Kroy and Notsob town,
But throughout all the nation called Eeknay, —
A nation young, but mighty. Its renown
Lay in the fact that it had come to see
That Tweedledum was worse than Tweedledee.

The effete monarchies of Eporue
The Eeknays scoffed at, and pronounced a "hum;"
Plans of milleniums they on paper drew,
And took out patents for a "kingdom come;"

Answers to all moon problems they evolved
By th' universal solvent — they "resolved!"

The difficulties of all politics
That had perplexed the lunar race of yore,
The wrongs of tyrants, the mob-leaders' tricks,
Were caused by kings, and kings should reign no more;
But one thing they forgot when they arranged it,—
The lunar nature; and they had not changed it.

They seemed to think, if weeds got in their garden,
They only needed a new style of fence;
That a soft head a brand new hat might harden;
Or some new institution give men sense;
And that to make men virtuous and wise,
You needed only some new law devise.

So when they had cast off the king's dominion
Who used to rule them from beyond the sea,
They took for symbol a spread eagle's pinion,
And soared and grew, and spread out famously;
They took an Elbib emblem — *great I am;*
But worshipped only one Ytirojam.

Whatever this Ytirojam should say,
By it they all agreed that they 'd abide:
To learn his will they then devised a way;
A little ark or box they did provide;
And — holding that all men would be inspired
To utter what Ytirojam desired —

They fixed a day on which, 'twixt morn and dark,
The men should choose some one to be their head.
Each dropped a little paper in the ark,
And these decided what the god had said.

They trusted not the idiots, nor women:
But whom the men elected, they put him in.

It seemed to be a curious superstition
That they should think this process could produce
A man half fit for any high position,
Or capable of any noble use:
For every paper in the moon had raved
Against all — but subscribers — as depraved.

If they said true, the mass of lunar men
Were knaves or fools, who could not understand
The vital principles which there and then
Ought to prevail throughout the lunar land;
And yet they seemed to think that wisdom's stuff
Could be produced by adding fools enough.

That muddy water could be made quite clear
By adding other muddy water to it;
And that to cleanse the public atmosphere,
The quickest way was slinging mud-balls through it:
That, when united they'd the gods surpass,
Although each individual was an ass.

Our earthly mathematics teaches us
That out of nothing, nothing comes; but here
The lunar populations fume and fuss,
Churn folly, and think wisdom will appear;
As if a lake from sweet to bitter varies,
Except a change come o'er its tributaries.

Some notions that they held were so unlike
Any that sane earth-men could ever hold,
I cannot greatly wonder if they strike

My readers as pure fiction when they 're told.
But I must tell the truth, though it be doubted,
And for its sake my whole moon-tale be scouted.

They hold that all men are created free;
As though one could be free till he had learned
The laws of his own nature; and could see
That good was politic; and office earned
By loss of truth was aught but chains to bind
The soul, in its own meanness close confined.

They hold that all are equal; yet they know
That cloth, and corn, and lumber, all may be
Well made, ill made, good, bad, or high or low,
Through all the endless range of quality.
As if the coward 's equal to the brave;
Or honest men no better than the knave!

They do not think a man can make a shoe
Unless he 's learned the trade. They want a coat,
And then they seek a tailor. But to do
The mighty work of ruling, they will vote
For any third-rate knave or blatherskite,
And wonder that the work is not done right.

They hold that every man to vote is fit,
E'en though too ignorant to understand
The good or evil of his wielding it;
Or if he seek to make or mar the land.
The reins thus fall from those who should be first;
The worst men rule — aristocrat reversed.

One day to me said Enak, "There 's to be
Gathered from far a great convention soon;
I am a delegate. You go with me,

And you shall see the wise men of the moon.
I'll show you how we do it: when you go
You can report our wisdom down below."

I went. A vast hall held a mighty crowd.
Grave men sat on the platform. Then one read
A string of resolutions; and aloud
The great throng thundered; and then he who led
Stood up to speak. Said he, "We do demand
Our principles shall rule this mighty land.

The people all are wise and good: but both
The parties that have governed us so long
Are grown corrupt; and I record my oath
They shall be broken; and the days of wrong
Shall be forgotten in that glorious hour
When your votes lift me to the seat of power."

Then he went on to promise what he 'd do.
When he was governor, the man who sold
Should get big prices for his wares; he who
Would buy, should find things cheap. As good as gold
He would make scraps of paper; and the poor
Should all be rich. And every wooer

Should gain the hand he sought. The lazy man
Should prosper; and the vicious
Should still be happy; those who never plan
Should hit success as well as the judicious.
Poor work should be well paid; and none should do
More than he felt inclined, or wanted to.

The fools should all be wise without the trouble
Of patient study; each quart pot should be

Made by a vote unanimous to hold double;
The homely should grow handsome; each fruit tree
Should bear more than the owner cared to pick,
And all should eat and drink, and not be sick.

I watched the lunar speaker: he was such
As only in the moon you 'd ever see —
A short, puffed body; and a bald head, much
Like the round moon at full; and frequently
He turned toward the initiate sitting by,
And winked obliquely with strabismic eye.

I thought the crowd would laugh at his pretence,
Or scorn him who had taken them for fools.
But no: they seemed to think he 'd spoken sense;
And under a suspension of the rules,

They said he was the man to save the nation,
And nominated him by acclamation.

With wild enthusiasm then they rose,
And on their shoulders bore him through the street;
Whoever bowed not, them they marked as foes;
Hats flung and cries, the long procession greet.
With revels loud they close the crazy day,
And dream their trouble all has passed away.

I said to Enak, as we talked that night,
"Is this the first time that a candidate
Has promised all the people's wrongs to right?"
"They always do it," said he. "Then the pate
Of the great public must be thick," said I,
"Or else they'd see that politicians lie."

"Oh, but," he answered, "some designing knaves,
Bankers, aristocrats, stand in the way.
'Tis capital that keeps the people slaves,
And thus puts off the great millenial day.
So all the thrifty ones who make and keep
We 're going to punish with damnation deep.

Then there 'll be no one to oppress the poor;
We 've thought we had the man to do it before,
But now at last we feel we 've got him sure."
"But is *he* poor?" said I. "No; he owns more
Than all the others," said he. "Our belief,
However, is, a thief to catch a thief.

And so a big gold-grabber we have taken;
For he knows how to grab the grabbers too."

"Ah, yes," said I, "but how if you awaken
To find that in his grabbing, he's grabbed you?"
"Oh, we moon-folk," he answered, "have found out
He's the best man who has the brassiest shout."

I sat and mused; and as I mused I thought,
"If our republic ever sees the day
When moon ideas their natural end have wrought,
Our old-time glory will have passed away.
Then let us pray that all such leaders soon
Be sent up to the land behind the moon."

Phase the Fifth.

MOON RELIGION.

And now, I'd heard so much of Eporue,
That I determined, ere my moon-voyage end,
To cross Citnalta Sea, and some days spend
In looking round to find whate'er was new.

Much saw I that 'twould take me long to tell;
The cities, buildings, and the people's ways.
But my strange story would run on for days
If I should all relate that there befell.

So one thing only may I speak of. There,
In Nodnol town arrived, I found me when

The day of Yadnus came; and throngs of men
Filled all the streets. I saw a house of prayer.

The crowds passed by. I turned and entered in.
No throng was there; but only, scattered round,
Some kneeling people here and there I found,
Who, in an absent way, bewailed their sin.

As each one entered he knelt down, and then
Some words he muttered in a hurried way.
One standing by I asked, "Is't thus they pray?"
"Some of them pray," he said, "and some count ten.

"It is a formula that they go through;
For everything must be in order here.

Of course they 'd like to have one be sincere;
But to keep up the form 's the thing to do."

I looked about me; though the light shone bright
Out in the streets and over all the town,
In here upon the people kneeling down
There seemed to settle a perpetual night.

To let in light the temples were not made;
But painted figures looked down through the gloom:
I wondered if the doctrine matched the room;
If the religion was designed for shade.

Up in the far-off loft, the droning choir
Chanted a music fitting; and the priest
Stood in the chancel, facing to the east;
Because, I learned, thence came the sacred fire.

Upon his gorgeous robes tall candles shone:
He knelt, he bowed, he stood, he walked about,
And then at intervals his voice broke out
In some strange utterance that they call "intone."

A censer then he lifted up, and rose
A curling smoke of incense on the air;
The god they worship likes this smell, and where
He 's not attracted by it, off he goes.

It seemed so strange to me that gods should care
For pictures, candles, and the fragrant smoke,
Or how the priest stood, or his colored cloak,
That when the worship ended, on the stair

That led into the vestry, I addressed
The priest who led the service, and confided

To him the points that I would have decided,
And all my curious doubts to him confessed.

I found that all he cared to tell about it
Was, that *'twas so* because they all believed.
So many people could not be deceived;
And that it was a damning sin to doubt it.*

I then a chapel visited, and heard
A man who stood up in a plain, black frock,
Address the people that he called his flock.
I found that this was "preaching of the word."

The word they preached was Elbib; but I found
That half a hundred sects who built on this,
And held it only showed the way to bliss,—
All of them said the others were not "sound."

* See "Damnatory Clause" in Creed.

They claim to hate all evil; but, instead,
It seemed to me, their hatred most intense
Was kept for those who in another sense
The sayings of their great book, Elbib, read.

For in their records of the past I learned
That always, when one sect had come to be
The power that held the state's supremacy,
They had the others tortured, chained, and burned.

But now there were so many in the state
Who cared not much what either sect might say,
The children of the "Prince of Peace" at bay
They kept; and persecutions did abate.

I asked a priest, "Do you believe all true
You teach the people?" "O dear, no," said he;

"But then 'twould never do to speak, you see
For though we don't believe, the *people* do."

I asked a working-man upon the street,
"Do you believe what priests say, to the letter?"
"O no, we are not fools; and we know better:
The *priests* do," said he, and he muttered, "cheat." *

When any mighty trouble shook the nation,
'Twas curious oftentimes to note the way
By which they sought the evil to allay,
And set at rest the grievous agitation.

One day there came a riot; for the people
Were starving in the streets for lack of bread.

* A lunar echo of an "o'er true tale."

One rich church called a meeting; and they said,
"The Lord is wroth; let's build a costly steeple."

Crime grew apace; and frequently the halter
Sent some poor soul to caverns down below.
A conclave clerical was held to know —
What colored cloth would please god on his altar.

The drifting crowds upon the street had said,
"There is no god, nor any future life."
The priests then wrangled in a furious strife
Concerning godhead in a piece of bread.

The great mob howled, "We are but beasts; let be;
There's nothing better than to eat and drink."
The lords and bishops gathered then to think
What they could do to prove the trinity.

From all this strange confusion much I sought
To gather out their real religion, what
They held of God and man and future; but
Such wild absurdity was all their thought,

I could make little clear. They seemed to teach
That at the first, God made a perfect moon,
But tainted with some flaw o'erlooked; for soon
The scheme of things had slipped beyond his reach.

And ever since, for many thousand years,
He had a hundred new devices tried
To win it back again; but still men cried
In anguish, and fell down their hopeless tears.

I asked them if their god was weak, that he
Could not prevent the evil; or if they

Thought he lacked wisdom? But they answered, "Nay."
They nothing knew, but — "'twas a mystery."

And yet they thought that he would punish those
Who read not Elbib; though of those who erred
The most part never had of Elbib heard,
And knew not even that they were its foes.

That they could worship such a deity, —
Or weak, or ignorant, or bad — I wondered;
But on their superstition as I pondered,
They only said — "it was a mystery."

They said he loved the lunar men, and sought
In every way to save them; yet the most
Were doomed to be irrevocably lost, —
So much of his endeavors came to naught.

And though the priests had labored faithfully
For ages, yet the moon grew only worse;*
Forever sinking 'neath the primal curse;
They still believed; but — "'twas a mystery."

And even God himself, they said, once came,
And died the awful curse to neutralize.
'Twas ages since; but still the old moon lies
Beneath the load, and staggers on the same.

'Twas strange Almighty Power so weak could be,
Or that All Wisdom could not find a way
By which to make those he had made obey;
But then, they said, — "it was a mystery."

The story had sprung up that once again,
When things had grown as bad as they could be,

* *Vide* "Prophetic Conference Doings," in "Tribune" Extra.

Their god returning in the clouds they'd see,
Blowing a trumpet o'er the lunar plain.

Then in one ruin all would shattered be.
The priests and some few others would escape,*
While darkness the whole universe should drape,
And all things end in awful "mystery."

Where else except upon the moon could thrive
Such rank and tropic weeds of thought? They seemed
Like some disturbed night fancies I had dreamed,
That darkness brought, and morn away would drive.

* *Vide* Tyng concerning Second Coming.

This great religion the moon-folk profess
First started as a gospel for the poor;
And as such, many years it did endure;
But now was ruled by fashion, pride, and dress.

Each sect was governed by a great ambition
To help mankind and its high god obey,
By vanquishing the church across the way,
In numbers, music, wealth, or high position.

They did indeed build chapels for the lowly —
In some side street where they could pious be
Without offence to aristocracy;
And then they wondered that they were not holy.

"O yes," they said, "they are our brothers; but —
The gospel round the corner we can send

Where plebeian smells our nostrils won't
offend,
Nor we be shocked by clothes of last year's cut."

And when the poor folk did not grateful prove,
They were surprised at their ingratitude;
And said th' uncultured never would be
good —
Did not deserve their patronage and love.

Still, so consuming was the holy fire
To outstrip all their neighbors in the race,
To make their church the fashionable place,
And on the street to have the tallest spire,

That they would load themselves with heavy debt,
And cripple all their powers. That they were
built

To teach the moon-race, and lift off its guilt, —
Over this homely truth they did not fret.

I went into one church; and very strange
The things I saw. I asked its holiest place.
The sexton showed me then, with solemn face,
An ice-cream freezer and a cooking-range.

The ark of their deliverance and their might
I found these were. The candid sexton said,
"Remove the kitchen and the social 'spread,'
And all church growth would suffer sudden blight."

They held that all the lunar race must go
Down deep moon caverns, there in endless pain

To cry forever, and to cry in vain,
Unless they Elbib and its god did know;

And yet in fashionable gayety
They passed their days; and all their brilliant nights
Were not too many for their fond delights.
I marvelled at their infidelity.

A fair young lady was in deep distress;
I sought the cause. She said — and tears did roll —
"I cannot go to church — shall lose my soul,
Because my prayer-book does n't match my dress."

I noticed that the men who highest stood,
Zealous in speech, and foremost in their prayers,

Sometimes mistook their neighbors' goods
for theirs.
Not always does moon-piety mean good.

Some of the greater lights, no common tapers,
Did swindle orphans and impoverish banks:
But still were pious; and could give God
thanks
They had not sinned by reading Yadnus papers.

For, strange as it may seem to us, they taught
That what the gods most cared for was the
creed.
If that was right they 'd overlook the deed:
Forgive the act, but damn the honest thought.

I wondered, till I read their books and saw
That they believed their god himself had done

Deeds that, down here, beneath our earthly sun,
Would make him criminal at the common law.

But when I questioned them, they said that he
Had given laws, but was not bound by them.
He had a right to do what we condemn:
There are no morals for the deity.*

I ceased to wonder things were out of tune.
For when folk worship one who is below
Themselves; then well may all things backward go,
On earth, or on the land behind the moon.

* "Samson Agonistes" of Milton, verses 307-321.

Phase the Sixth.

THE LUNAR VIEW OF SCIENCE.

When I to Notsob back returned,
A man named Kcollam went with me;
A reputation he had earned,
On both sides of Citnalta sea,

As one who with contemptuous scorn
Upon Ecneics looked adown;
He seemed to think that he was born
To blight it with his deadly frown.

As in our air-ship on we drove,
We passed one night up o'er the sea;

The night stars glittered bright above,
The night winds fanned us fitfully.

And as the evening onward wore
We sat on deck and talked. Upcurled
The smoke of our cigars, as o'er
We turned the questions of the world.

"Th' Association for the advance-
Ment of Ecneics soon convenes
In Notsob" said I, "and perchance
You 'll tell me what Ecneics means.

"I've often heard the thing assailed
Since I have been upon the moon;
But in the discord I have failed
To catch the meaning of the tune."

Said he, "From the Ecneics craze
I would advise you, — hold aloof!
These are the men who always raise
The unreasonable yell for *proof*.

"We build some structure in the air
So fair we cannot help but love it;
One of these fellows's always there,
To say, 'If it is real, prove it.'

"As if we could! such senseless stuff!
Of course their claim cannot be sound!
Of proof there is n't half enough
For what we hold to go all round.

"Ecneics is good enough," said he,
"If it would only keep its place;
It's been of some utility
In helping on the lunar race.

"Our houses, streets, machines and fires,
And most of all our civilization
To it we owe. But it aspires
To question all things in the nation.

"It has no reverence for the wise;
And nothing will it take for granted.
It into every corner pries,
And says 'the proof is what is wanted.'"

"But, sir," said I, "you have, of course,
The proof of what you know is true;
When they ask questions then, and force
Some action, this is what I'd do:—

"I'd meet them on their chosen ground,
And at their own game overdo 'em;
All this wild clamor I'd confound:
When they want proof I'd give it to 'em."

"But, my dear fellow," he replied,
"You don't begin to see the bottom
Of lunar questions. Proofs!" he cried,
"We can't give proofs; we have n't got
'em!

"And here 's just where the mischief lies;
It 's what the fuss is all about!
We can't give proof; and if their cries
Don't stop, the folk will find it out.

"And so we 're bound to put them down;
Some way to do it we must get;
On asking questions we must frown,
Or everything will be upset.

"Oh, that the good old days were back!
When ancient Emor ruled the land;

We had the thumb-screw and the rack,
And then such things we would n't stand."*

"But, here upon the moon," said I,
"Do you know that a thing is true
That has no proof?" "Why certainly!
We know it, sir, because — we do!

"Why, nothing that we value here
Rests upon any solid base.
Faith only, on the lunar sphere
Has any right to hold a place."†

"What are the precious things," said I,
"That these bad men would take away?"
"Why everything in moon and sky,
That will not stand the light of day.

* See "The Logic of Toleration," by W. H. Mallock, in "Nineteenth Century" for January, 1879.

† *Vide* Article by W. H. Mallock on "Faith and Verification," in "Nineteenth Century," October, 1878.

"We have," he said, "an ancient book
That we have held it sin to doubt;
Between its covers we could look,
And thus could everything find out.

"We know it came down from the sky:
But these men challenge us to prove it.
They have no right to question why;
For as to proof, the book's above it.

"This precious book reveals the fact
That we were perfect made at first;
But that we fell for some slight act,
And now each new age is the worst.

"The moon's as bad as it can be;
And we so happy were to know it.
Our hope of total depravity —
These wicked men would overthrow it."

"But," said I, "what do these strange teachers
Propose that you should take instead?"
"Oh, they would ruin all the preachers
By talking common-sense," he said.

"They say, the facts all go to prove,
And from the facts we can't escape,
We started low down, not above,
And our forefather was — an ape!

"Thus is our dignity attacked!
If that is what the fact does say,
So much the worse then for the fact!
We won't believe it any way!

"And then they say, the lunar race,
Sprung out of all this beastly mess,
Is climbing up, at some slow pace,
And destined ever to progress."

"But, sir," said I, "it seems to me,
'Tis better to start low and climb,
Than having once been up, to be
Now travelling downward all the time."

"I see you do not understand
Our precious moon beliefs," said he.
"The notions of the lunar land
All rest upon antiquity.

"And what antiquity has said,
That and that only must be true."
"But what else," said I, "do you dread,
That these men threaten they will do?"

He answered, "There was once a devil,
Who, with his angels, ruled the air.
He taught the moon-folk to do evil,
And tempted people everywhere.

"These men who teach Ecneics, say
That he is but a hideous dream,
That cannot stand the light of day,
But vanishes with morning's beam.

"Such stuff as this we will not bear;
Our whole religion is o'erthrown
If such talk gets into the air;
It all rests on the devil alone. *

"Without him there would be no need
That our religion should be taught.
To upset then this ancient creed
Is with most terrible danger fraught.

"If we allow them to go on
Investigating everything,

* "There would be few Christians if there were no devil."— *Saying of a Church Member of some importance.*

Our dearest hopes will soon be gone,
And all our precious faiths take wing."

"But," still I questioned, "I may nurse
A thought nonsensical to you:
But can their doctrine well be worse
Than that which you believe is true?

"Had I been born of lunar birth,
I should not like your views to keep.
I think that thoughtful men on earth
Would rather end in dreamless sleep."

He sprang up then, and looked at me,
And cried, "I should not dare to speak
Such awful infidelity,
Lest on me God his wrath should wreak."

And while he stood there on the deck,
"Not only this," he said, "but they
All morals too will hurl to wreck
If they can only have their way.

"For here they come in specious wise,
And question why this thing is right
And that is wrong. Thus they devise
A way our moral growth to blight.

"There is no rèason we can show:
And if you could, men would n't do it;
The strongest reason they can know,
Is that there is no reason to it."*

I sat and mused when he had gone;
'Twas such a mad world I had found!

* Mallock, *ibid.*

Above the silent stars looked on,
And kept their everlasting round,

And seemed to say, "'Twas æons long
Ere out from chaos old we came
And learned to chant our perfect song,
And each in order trim her flame.

"Eternity is not in haste;
The perfect day dawns late or soon;
Things grow as the long ages waste,
And will, even there upon the moon."

Next day the lights of Notsob flared
Upon me, back o'er sea once more.
I went to see the men who dared
To question Kcollam's sacred lore.

And though he said they were the foes
Of morals and religion too,
I heard no sound of deadly blows,
And there were no police in view.

The President, with simple air,
Rose up to speak, and on his brow
His hair was white. Then read he there
A paper in soft voice and low.

And in the paper he set forth
The plans of the Ecneics folk;
They seemed to me of noble worth,
Or else his words were but a cloak.

He said they held that God had given
Folk brains that truth might thus be known;
That truth from earth, or truth from heaven,
By proof was 'stablished, not o'erthrown;

That gold, when tested, only showed
That it was truly gold; and brass —
By ignorance with false worth endowed —
True men, for gold, ought not to pass.

He did not think the mind of man
Was "for delusion given"; but hoped
The outlines of a mighty plan
Might be discerned; though still they groped

But dimly for the truth of things.
Each more and more of truth might see,
If to the test his thought he brings,
And studies with humility.

He thought the light divine outshone
From moon and star, from face and soul;
Not dreams nor guesses, but alone
Most patient search would reach the goal.

He did not think the destiny
Of men could hang on creeds unproved;
The test of sanctity must be
In loving others and being loved.

The great Creator never meant
To play a game of hide and seek;
Nor is his bow of wrath e'er bent
'Gainst those who their true thought outspeak.

He is the false man who dares say
For truth that which he does n't know,
And he the high God does obey
Who follows truth where'er it go.

He held as safe one only path, —
That which begins with what is known.
Let each be true to what he hath,
And study till to more it 's grown.

I listened wondering: could this be
The thing of which moon-folk complain?
But, as I thought more, I could see
'Twould throw down many a "Castle in Spain."

And while moon people still will rear
Cloud-structures and declare them rock,
Eeneics will their foe appear,
And give their fancies many a shock.

And so I ceased to wonder why
The moon-folk hate the men who say,
"Truth on the earth, truth in the sky,
Must answer *why*, or pass away."

Phase the Seventh.

ALL MOONSHINE.

Just then a distant roar I heard, that grew
Each moment louder still, and nearer drew;
A gathering mob came rushing up the street
With threat, and brandished club, and shuffling feet;
And as they thundered toward the little hall,
Their unloosed rage with terror did appal.
"Down with this curst Eeneics!" then they cried,
"These foes of moon and heaven we'll not abide!"
Kcollam was leader; and the crowd stood still
As he strode forward to declare their will.
Upon a bench he leapt, and then he said:

"Traitors to truth, thank me you are not dead.
See here a throng of followers who love
Their fellow moon-folk and the God above.
They will no longer suffer it that you
Should question if their ancient faith is true.
Have ye forgotten the long line of those
The good old moon has tortured as its foes?
How one vile wretch once said, beyond the sea,
The sun was only fire, and had to flee?
Or how our fathers hemlock fed to him
Who dared the glory of the gods to dim?
Or how another on his knees confessed
The grand truth that the moon stands still at rest?'
Or how another was convinced by flame,
That three and one may sometimes be the same?
Or that the men of faith have always shown
By fire and sword, they hold the truth alone?
And do not dare to think, at this late day,

That you our truth are going to take away.
Emor is mighty still. The civil power
Protects you now; but there will come an hour,
When for our votes, some politician may
Restore the glory of our ancient day.
Then you shall feel the fiery foretaste here,
Of what awaits you in another sphere."*

Then all was wild confusion; and aloud
Up rose the voices of the angry crowd.
But soon a mist passed over all the place;
Nor clearly could I make out form or face.

Then suddenly the scene was changed: I thought
I sat once more in the strange craft that brought
Me first to Notsob. In their old-time places

* *Vide* note, p. 114.

Yelnats and Enak sat. Their kindly faces
Looked at me dimly, as a face that seems
Still hovering o'er you when you wake from dreams.
Then down, down, down, and ever down
I seemed to sink; till o'er my face was blown
The fresh night wind that came from off the sea.
I heard a voice, and started suddenly,
Just as a little hand grasped at my coat,
And a voice shouted, "Papa! see that boat!
It's sailing straight out on the moonshine there,
And looks as if it floated in the air!
I called to you three times. What made you keep
So still? Papa, I guess you've been asleep."
I caught her in my arms; and on my knee
Held her close clasped, and looked out o'er the sea.
The stars were shining; and the trooping bands
Of ripples came and played upon the sands.

And ever as I mused, the low waves' croon
Played duet with my thoughts, and hummed the tune—
"He 's been upon the land behind the moon."

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